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Message Text

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10
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SCCT-02 DRC-01 /093 W
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R 110845Z SEP 74
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4498
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, JA, KS
SUBJ: JAPANESE DOMESTIC TREATMENT OF JAPAN-ROK RELATIONS

SUMMARY: JAPANESE PRESS COVERAGE OF DIFFICULTIES IN JAPAN-ROK RELATIONS IN RECENT WEEKS HAS BEEN REMARKABLY RESTRAINED AND HAS AVOIDED FANNING POPULAR EMOTIONS. ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION HAS ATTEMPTED TO EXPLOIT ISSUE, PRESS APPROACH HAS PERMITTED GOJ TO DEAL WITH KOREAN PROBLEM IN DOMESTIC ENVORNMENT UNCOMPLICATED BY PRESSURES FOR PRECIPITATE ACTION. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE AUG 15 ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF PRES PARK, JAPANESE PRESS HAS PROVIDED CONSTANT HEAVY COVERAGE OF SUBSEQUENT SERIES OF MOVES AND COUNTERMOVES BY ROK AND GOJ. IN GENERAL, TREATMENT HAS BEEN RESTRAINED, CAREFUL AND, GIVEN VOLATILITY OF ISSUES INVOLVED, OF SORT DESIGNED TO AVOID STIMULATION OF EMOTIONAL RESPONSE BY PUBLIC.

2. MOST COMMON EDITORIAL THEME HAS BEEN THAT GOJ AND ROK SHOULD MAKE CONSCIENTIOUS EFFORTS TO PUT BRAKE ON SERIES OF
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STATEMENTS, INCIDENTS AND EVENTS WHICH HAVE PLACED INCREAS-

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ING STRAIN ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO GOVTS. EDITORIALS HAVE FOR MOST PART URGED THAT TWO SIDES STOP IRRITATING EACH OTHER AND KEEP CALM. A FEW HAVE ADOPTED MORE "NATIONISTIC" HARD LINE. YOMIURI, FOR EXAMPLE, DEMANDED ROK APOLOGY AND COMPENSATION IN CONNECTION WITH MOB ACTION AGAINST JAPANESE EMBASSY IN SEOUL. IT BEARS REPEATING, HOWEVER, THAT MOST HAVE SOUGHT TO AVOID AROUSING PASSIONS AND IN SEVERAL CASES SUGGESTED THAT, TO KEEP PERSPECITIVE, JAPANESE SHOULD CONSIDER KOREAN HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE AND VIEWPOINTS.

3. IN KEEPING WITH FOREGOING, WHILE PAPERS HAVE CHARACTERIZED REMAKRS BY FOREIGN MINISTER KIMURA AND OTHER OFFICIALS ON "THREAT FROM NORTH" AND ON GOVT AUTHORITY ON KOREAN PENINSULA AS CORRECT, THEY HAVE QUESTIONED TIMING AND CHOICE OF WORDS AND URGED GOJ CAUTION IN MAKING PUBLIC STATEMENTS. FONOFF OFFICIALS HAVE COMPLAINED THAT MEDIA HAVE DISTORED MEANING OF KIMURA AND OTHER GOJ STATEMENTS, BUT EVEN THEY WERE MORE TROUBLED BY THEIR OWN TIMING THAN BY BAD PRESS PERFORMANCE. ON OTHER ASPECTS OF CURRENT CONTRETEMPTS, AGAIN WITH CAVEATS ABOUT REMAINING CALM, PRESS HAS BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF GOJ ACTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, PAPERS HAVE UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED CORRECTNESS OF GOJ POLICE INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES RE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT, PRIMIN'S STANCE RE CHOSEN SOREN AND GOVT STRESS ON PRIMACY OF JAPANESE DOMESTIC LAW. THEY ALSO HAVE TENDED TO AVOID MOVES TO RALLY SUPPORT FOR TWO JAPANESE STUDENTS CONVICTED BY ROK COURT MARTIAL, ALTHOUGH SOME HAVE SUGGESTED SOME KIND OF AMNESTY OR PARDON BY ROK WOULD EASE TENSIONS.

4. WHILE PRESS HAS PROCEEDED WITH CAUTION, AMONG OPPOSITION PARTIES, JCP AND JSP HAVE ISSUED PREDICTABLE STATEMENTS DENOUNCING ROK INTERFERENCE IN JAPANESE DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, DEMANDING PROTECTION FOR CHOSEN SOREN, URGING RELEASR OF KIM DAE JUNG AND FREEING OF JAPANESE STUDENTS. THROUGH THESE PRONOUNCEMENTS AND THROUGH INTERPELLATIONS IN DIET COMMITTEES, THEY HAVE SOUGHT TO EMBARRASS GOJ AND EXPLOIT CURRENT SITUATION FOR OWN POLITICAL ENDS, MOST RECENTLY BY CLAIMING IN DIET THAT KCIA AGENTS WERE ARRIVING IN JAPAN IN GUISE OF NEWSMEN. ON SEPT 19, THESE PARTIES PLUS KOMEITO AND USUAL COVEY OF "DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATIONS" WILL HOLD TOKYO PROTEST
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RALLY AGAINST PARK REGIME AND GOJ RE "POLITICAL SUPPRESSION" IN ROK. ALL OF THIS HAS SO FAR FAILED TO GENERATE MUCH POPULAR RESONSE, ALTHOUGH CAUSING GOJ UNCOMFORTABLE MOMENTS.

5. COMMENT: PRESS RESTRAINT AND TEPID SUCCESS OF OPPOSITION PARTY TACTICS REGARDING KOREAN ISSUE HAS PERMITTED GOJ TO DEAL WITH VERY REAL PROBLEMS OF SEOUL RELATIONSHIP IN A RELATIVELY CALM DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT. SUPPORT FOR THIS

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ASSESSMENT CAN BE INFERRED FROM REMARKS OF MASAKI SEO, DIRECTOR, NORTHEAST ASIA DIVISION, WHO TOLD EMBOFF THAT MOFA OFFICIALS PLEASED WITH CAREFUL MANNER IN WHICH MEDIA TREATING JAPAN-KOREAN DEVELOPMENTS IN RECENT WEEKS. END COMMENT.
HODGSON

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